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Hollis, N.H. - Minute-Man's Day, 1868.



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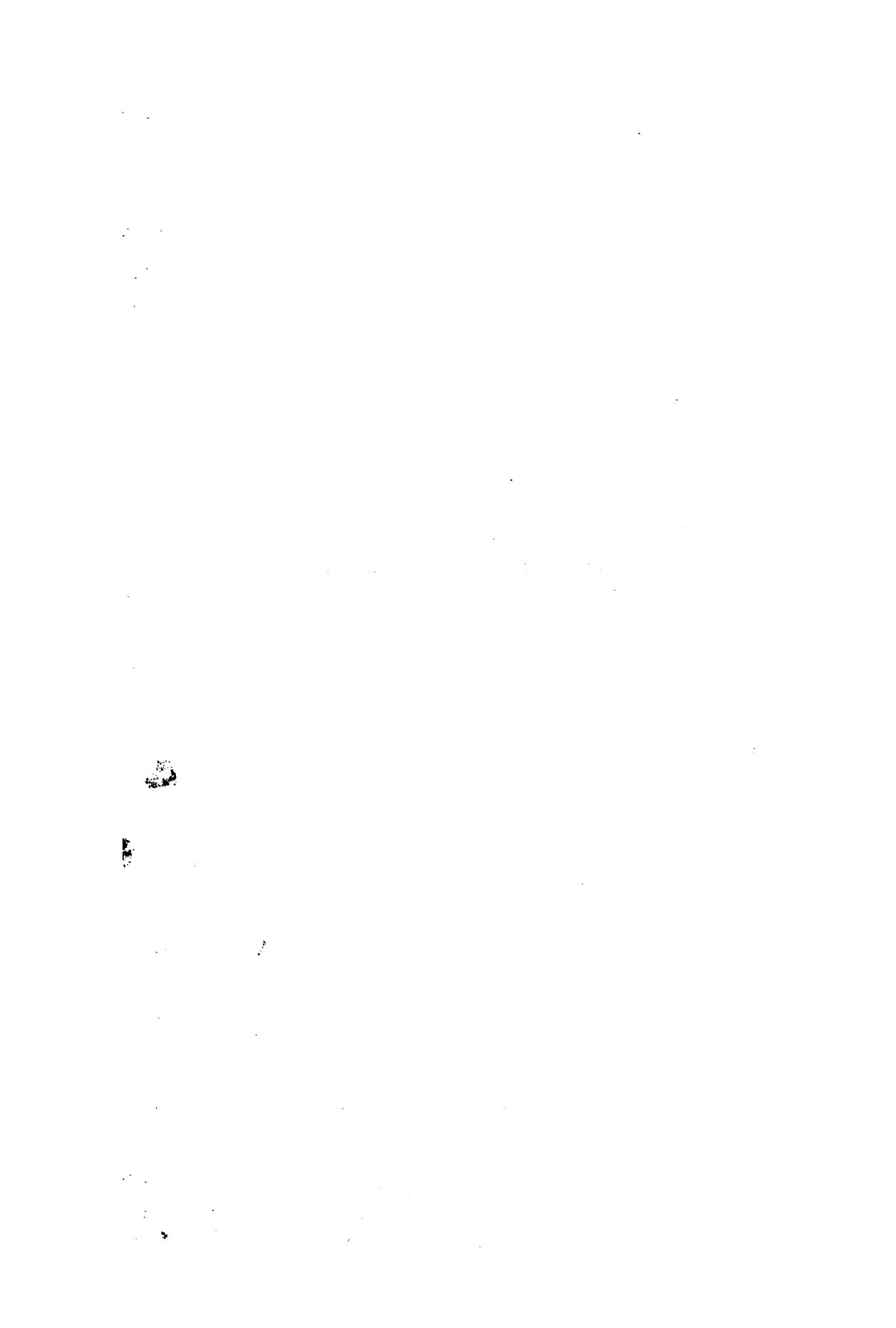
MINUTE-MEN'S DAY,

HOLLIS, N. H.

1898.









SOLDIERS' MONUMENT AND THE NEVENS STONE, HOLLIS.



LIEUT. CHARLES H. FARLEY.



CORP. JOHN W. HAYDEN.

o

PROCEEDINGS

OF

MINUTE-MEN'S DAY,

HOLLIS, N. H.

1898.

INCLUDING ADDRESS OF

MISS SARAH ALICE WORCESTER, A. M.

CONCORD, N. H.:

IRA C. EVANS, PRINTER, 12 SCHOOL STREET.

1899.

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Lawrence S. Mayo

PRELIMINARY STATEMENTS.

At a special town meeting held April 3, 1896, it being the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the incorporation of the town, steps were taken to honor the minute-men of April 19, 1775, who went from this town, and the matter was referred to the following committee: Messrs. Cyrus F. Burge, Enoch J. Colburn, Daniel W. Hayden, Charles B. Richardson, and Silas M. Spalding.

At the annual town meeting, March 9, 1897, a sum not exceeding one hundred and fifty dollars was appropriated for the purpose of carrying out the plans of the above named committee, which at this time was enlarged by the appointment of Charles A. Hale and Charles S. Spaulding.

In August, 1897, a contract was made by this committee with the Bridgeport Monumental Bronze Company for a bronze tablet to be fastened on the face of the "Nevens Stone," bearing in raised letters the names of the ninety-two minute-men who marched from Hollis Common, April 19, 1775. This tablet was completed and delivered according to contract.

At the annual town meeting, March 8, 1898, the committee reported, recommending that the town at some suitable date hold dedicatory ceremonies at the unveiling of the above tablet. The appointment of such a day was referred back to this committee.

The committee thought the proper time for such ceremonies would be on April 19, 1898, one hundred and twenty-five years after the marching of these men from Hollis; but recognizing the liability of inclement weather on that date, and being informed that the John H. Worcester Post, No. 30, G. A. R., desired to dedicate the cannon which they had placed upon the Common some time in the summer, Friday, June 17, 1898, was finally selected as an appropriate and convenient time for both of the above exercises.

The Nevens Stone. The history of the stone mentioned above is this: On the afternoon of April 19, 1775, three of the Nevens brothers were at work on their homestead farm, situated in the north part of Hollis, digging stone for a wall, when the news was brought that the British troops were marching to Lexington and Concord for the purpose of destroying the military stores belonging to the Americans. At the moment the horseman appeared who brought the news, they were engaged in prying up a large, flat stone. They threw a boulder under it, leaving it inclined substantially as it is now, and immediately hastened to the Common and joined their comrades, with whom they marched that night for the scene of action.

The stone, which has since become famous as the Nevens stone, was allowed to remain in the position they left it for one hundred years, when it was taken up and put into a stone wall by Maj. James Wheeler, the owner of the old Nevens homestead at that time.

A few years since an effort was made to have the names of the ninety-two minute-men of the town placed on the soldiers' monument on the Common, but as this was not acceptable to the town, it was proposed to secure the Nevens stone, place it on the Common in the position left by the brothers, suitably inscribe it, and put on it their names. This was subsequently done by a committee appointed for that purpose.

The Cannon. At a meeting of John H. Worcester Post, No. 30, G. A. R., December 3, 1896, Comrade Daniel W. Hayden stated that he had corresponded with the Hon. Henry M. Baker, M. C., and had ascertained that by proper application to the secretary of the navy the Post could obtain cannon for memorial purposes. At his own request Comrade Hayden was chosen agent for the Post to procure two cannon, four shot, and four shells, and place them on the Common.

Having received authority from the government, Mr. Hayden visited Charlestown Navy Yard, and selected two thirty-two pounder cannon, with the stated number of projectiles. The guns arrived in Hollis in due time, and were mounted on the Common, January 11, 1897.

Mr. Hayden was then chosen committee by the Post to make the necessary arrangements for naming and dedicating the cannon, which occurred June 17, 1898.

EXERCISES AT THE NAMING AND DEDICATING OF THE CANNON.

A procession consisting of the Hollis Cornet Band; John H. Worcester Post, No. 30, G. A. R.; Department Commander Albert S. Twitchell and staff; John G. Foster Post, Nashua; O. W. Lull Post, Milford; Phelps Post, Amherst; James S. Thornton Post, Merrimack; Thomas A. Parker Post, Pepperell, Mass.; Veterans' Memorial Association, Townsend, Mass.; and Sons of Veterans, was formed at the G. A. R. Hall at 11 A. M., and proceeded to the Common.

ADDRESS BY COMMANDER DANIEL W. HAYDEN.

As commander of the John G. Worcester Post, No. 30, upon me devolves the duty of welcoming you to our good old town of Hollis. It is with great pleasure that I accept the honor, and extend to you a soldier's greeting. My comrades and the citizens of Hollis are glad that you have come to us to-day, and we are all glad to salute our comrades from Massachusetts. We have assembled this beautiful morning for a special purpose, and while standing on this historic ground, which has been beautified by our inhabitants, kindly allow me a few words of explanation.

This Common, the site for the church, and the old burying ground by it, were given to the town by Abraham Taylor in 1740 or soon after. From this ground Capt. Reuben Dow marched the first company of Hollis soldiers in the War of the Revolution. Upon this ground Capt. Nathan Ames drilled Hollis's first company in the War of the Rebellion. Grateful descendants have placed these three names on

memorial windows in the church. Another noble name, John H. Worcester, has been honored by the naming of our Grand Army Post.

There are other names of true heroes who laid down their lives for their country, which we wish to perpetuate, and for whom there are no public monuments. Therefore I am directed by my comrades to request you, Commander, to dedicate these cannon to the memory of Lieut. Charles H. Farley and Corp. John W. Hayden. That you may know that these names are worthy of our respect and remembrance, I will request their comrades, William F. Spalding and Winslow J. Spalding, to pronounce brief eulogies.

ADDRESS OF WILLIAM F. SPALDING.

I have been invited by your committee to say a few words eulogistic of our late comrade, Lieut. Charles H. Farley, in whose honor you propose to name one of these cannon now before us. I have accepted the invitation with pleasure, fully believing that I was more intimately associated with him, from the time of his enlistment in September, 1861, till his untimely death on February 24, 1864, than any person living to-day. To the surviving comrades of Company H, Seventh New Hampshire Volunteers, no monument of this or of any other kind is needed to perpetuate his memory. Comrades, you never will, you never can, forget his sterling worth as a citizen, soldier, and friend. But to the generation born since the civil war this will be an object lesson in patriotism.

Lieut. Charles Henry Farley was born in Hollis, July 31, 1835, the son of Deacon Leonard W. and Clarissa B. Farley. After attending the district school in Hollis and the high school in Nashua, he learned the carpenter's trade with his father. At the time of enlistment he had just finished building his first house, for the late Capt. Thomas Procter, making, as was customary in those days, his own plans, and winning for himself the title of "master carpenter." As soon as Captain Ames received his recruiting papers, Lieutenant Farley was among the first to enlist as a private. He did not enlist for fame or glory, but from a stern sense of

duty. If I remember rightly, Charles H. Fletcher's name was first, Charles H. Farley's second, and my own the third. After enlisting we used to drill on this now hallowed ground, then an open training field.

In October, 1861, we went into camp at Manchester, N. H. When the non-commissioned officers were appointed, Private Farley was appointed first, or orderly, sergeant, which position he held until June 30, 1862, when he was promoted to second lieutenant.

All military men will agree with me that the position of an orderly sergeant is one of the most disagreeable places in the army, being placed, as it were, between two fires — the officers who issue the orders and the men who are to obey them. Lieutenant Farley, with his even temper, filled this position with credit, and was universally beloved by every man in his company. At the charge on Fort Wagner, July 18, 1863, he was with his company, waded the ditch, scaled the parapet under a murderous fire, and was very near our beloved Colonel Putnam when he was killed. Two bullets passed through Lieutenant Farley's clothes, one lodging in a small Testament which he carried in his pocket. At the battle of Olustee, Fla., February 20, 1864, Lieutenant Farley, now a first lieutenant, having been promoted after the charge on Fort Wagner, was wounded in the leg. He stopped under a pine tree and tried to stop the bleeding with his handkerchief. Soon our forces were driven back, and some of the men of his company offered to assist him, but he told them to never mind him but look out for themselves. Being thus left between two fires, he was afterwards mortally wounded in the back. Taken a prisoner to Lake City, he was found by two ladies, school teachers, formerly from New Hampshire, from whom he received every attention possible, but survived only five days.

After the war his remains were brought to his native town and interred near those of the brave Lieutenant Worcester.

When sixteen years of age he joined the Baptist church in Hollis, and ever after lived a consistent, Christian life. He had none of the bad habits supposed to be peculiar to army

life, but in all respects was a model man and soldier. He was never known to lose his self control even under the most trying circumstances. His men would do anything he desired through love and respect for him. Let us all try to emulate his virtues; vices he had none.

ADDRESS OF WINSLOW J. SPALDING.

It would seem fitting at this time that a few words should be presented in eulogy of our long since departed comrade, Corp. John W. Hayden, in memory of whom one of these cannon is named and dedicated to-day.

As we think of Corporal Hayden it carries us back thirty-seven years to the time Abraham Lincoln, the president of the United States, called for three hundred thousand volunteers to hold and protect the union. There are a few comrades standing before me who remember Corporal Hayden in the company drill here in this Common and later in camp at Manchester, where he did special detective service in looking after deserters. Still later we remember him on duty at the White Street barracks, New York city, where he contracted a severe cold, which resulted in that dread disease, typhoid pneumonia. How patiently he bore that sickness and suffering! But alas! it was but a few days when his Master the Lord called him to a larger and more glorious service.

With a temperament singularly frank and a mind always alert, Corporal Hayden was also blessed with a disposition so lovable that he drew to himself, with an irresistible charm, those to whom close association revealed the guiding springs of his life. Loyalty to his own high sense of right and duty made him a true and worthy citizen, noble in thought and deed, and a typical soldier.

Corporal Hayden was the first Hollis soldier in the War of the Rebellion to be called to the eternal camping ground. Had he been spared to us, I believe he would have risen to high rank in his country's service. Comrades, although his service to his country's cause was for only a few months, his life cannot but enlarge our conception of the dignity which belongs to human kind.

Daniel W. Hayden then stepping forward, said:

Commander: By virtue of authority vested in you as Commander of the Department of New Hampshire, Grand Army of the Republic, will you name the cannon on the right Lieut. Charles H. Farley and the one on the left Corp. John W. Hayden, and dedicate them to their memory, in the name of Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty.

Commander Albert S. Twitchell and staff then performed the dedicatory service of the Grand Army of the Republic, closing by naming the cannon as requested.

Immediately following the exercises on the Common, dinner was served in the banquet hall under the direction of the Woman's Relief Corps.

EXERCISES ON THE COMMON.

At two o'clock p. m. the people assembled on the Common, and after being entertained with music by the Hollis Cornet Band, appropriate words were spoken by Silas M. Spalding, president of the day, who introduced the governor, Hon. George A. Ramsdell, who honored us by his presence, and who, in a brief address, paid high tribute to the town and to those who had given up their lives in defence of country.

The Nevens stone had been previously draped with four United States flags, and at the conclusion of the governor's address the ceremony of unveiling was performed, under the direction of Post Commander Hayden, by these eight Hollis boys: Willie W. Worcester, Winfred H. Woods, Willie E. Lund, George E. Wilson, Frank J. Stimson, George W. Blood, Robert B. Burns, and George W. Adams.

Prayer was then offered by Rev. Samuel L. Gerould, D. D., after which the assemblage repaired to the town hall.

The Nevens stone, thus unveiled, is polished upon its edge facing the town hall, with this inscription cut upon it: "The Nevens Brothers were at work on this stone, on their farm, April 19, 1775, and left it in this position at the Minute-men's alarm, to join their comrades upon this Common."

The names upon the tablet, on the face of the stone, of the ninety-two minute-men who marched for Lexington, April 19, 1775, are:

Reuben Dow, <i>Captain.</i>	William French,
John Goss, <i>1st Lieutenant.</i>	Ebenezer Wheeler,
John Cummings, <i>2d Lieutenant.</i>	Benjamin Wright, Jr.,
Nathan Blood,	Joseph Bailey,
Joshua Boynton,	Benjamin Wright,
William Nevens,	Nathaniel Wheat,
Minot Farmer,	Benjamin Nevens,

Sampson Powers,
James McIntosh,
James McConnor,
Ephraim Blood,
David Farnsworth,
Noah Worcester,
Uriah Wright,
Thomas Pratt,
Elias Boynton,
Samuel Hill,
Benjamin Cummings,
Samuel Jewett,
Israel Kenney,
David Ames,
William Wood,
John Campbell,
Lebbeus Wheeler,
Abel Brown,
Nahum Powers,
Isaac Stearns,
Samuel Hosley,
Daniel Taylor,
Francis Blood,
Ezekiel Proctor,
Jacob Spaulding,
Ebenezer Ball,
Thomas Kemp,
Amos Taylor,
Jacob Read,
Thomas Wheat,
James Fisk,
Josiah Fisk,
Jonathan Eastman,
Amos Eastman,
Aaron Hardy,
Benjamin Boynton,
Ephraim Pierce,
Jonas Blood,
James Colburn,

Joseph Nevens,
Nathaniel Ball,
Benjamin Sanders,
Ebenezer Gilson,
Thaddeus Wheeler,
Thomas Patch,
Samuel Johnson,
Benjamin Abbot,
William Tenney,
Benjamin Farley,
Jonathan Russ,
John Philbrick,
Ebenezer Jaquith,
Manuel Grace,
Robert Seaver,
Nathan Phelps,
Daniel Blood, Jr.,
Edward Johnson,
Jacob Danforth,
Bray Wilkins,
Israel Wilkins,
Job Bailey,
Samuel Leeman,
Joseph Minot,
James Dickey,
Jonathan Ames,
Randall McDaniels,
David Wallingford,
Richard Bailey,
Nathan Colburn,
Abner Keyes,
Joel Bailey,
John Atwell,
Jesse Wyman,
Ephraim Howe,
Samuel Conroy,
Thomas Colburn,
Ebenezer Farley,
Ebenezer Youngman.

EXERCISES IN THE TOWN HALL.

After the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner" by the choir, Francis A. Lovejoy made the following

ADDRESS OF WELCOME.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our town to-day, at a time when there is such an intensely patriotic feeling throughout the country. We are glad to meet so many old friends who take an interest in our town.

Let us briefly review the history which has made our town what it is. One hundred and seventy years ago there was not a white person living in the place. In 1731 Peter Powers and Annie, his wife, with two children, Peter, Jr., and Stephen, came to what is now Hollis, and located about one half mile northwest of this town hall. They, as we, enjoyed the same air, pure water, changing seasons, summer's heat and winter's cold, and yet how different their situation from ours to-day! Their nearest neighbor was nearly ten miles away. They had no communication with the world at large. There were no public highways, only a bridle path, marked by blazed trees. Within nine years other settlers had come, and a parish was formed; and in thirteen years thirty families had settled here, and a church was organized, which has always been a controlling power in the town. Hollis never has lacked in patriotism; its citizens have ever stood shoulder to shoulder whenever their services were needed, against the wily Indian, the oppressors of the mother country, or those in our own nation who rose up in rebellion against it, as yonder monument testifies. Brave men have labored, and we have entered into their labors, enjoying the fruits of what they did.

From these humble beginnings our town has steadily advanced to its present estate. Its numerous highways, beautiful scenery, well tilled farms, pleasant homes, public schools, free library, testify to the work of our fathers and those of the present generation.

We are glad you have met on yonder historic Common, and have looked upon its memorials of brave men gone to their reward. We are glad you are here this afternoon, where you will have presented to you some historical incidents of the history of this town.

We most cordially greet you, and extend to all of you the hospitality that becomes a grateful people. We trust that the day will prove an inspiration, prompting us to nobler, higher, holier aspirations, and at the close of useful lives we can say with the poet Bryant,—

“So live that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not as the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust; approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

The exercises of the afternoon were enlivened with singing by a select choir, under the direction of Mr. Charles H. Davis, and a solo, “The Sword of Bunker Hill,” by William F. Spalding.

After the address of Miss Sarah Alice Worcester, which follows, brief remarks were made by invited guests, among them being Deacon John E. Foster and Mr. ~~Nathan~~ H. Brown, of Milford; Mr. Roswell T. Smith and Col. Dana W. King, of Nashua; Capt. John W. Crawford, of Manchester; also by Mr. Daniel W. Hayden, of this place.

Letters were received from invited friends abroad unable to be present: Hon. Horace W. Hale, Denver, Col.; Deacon Henry G. Little, Grinnell, Ia.; Hon. John H. Hardy, Arlington, Mass.; Hon. Ithamer B. Sawtelle, Townsend, Mass.; Prof. W. F. Bradbury, Cambridge, Mass.; Prof. E. K. Emerson, Amherst, Mass.; Hon. Stephen S. Jewett, Laconia; Mr. Charles Cummings, Medford, Mass.; Fred A.

Hubbard, Greenwich, Conn.; Mr. Charles Woods, Piqua, O.; Samuel A. Green, M. D., Boston, Mass.; and Miss Mary L. P. Shattuck, Pepperell, Mass., regent of the Prudence (Cummings) Wright Chapter, D. of the A. R., formed that day.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS.

BY MISS SARAH ALICE WORCESTER, A. M.

Fellow Citizens of Hollis and Distinguished Guests:

There are two dates which gleam, as it were, with electric radiance, as we look back over the Revolutionary period. Need I say that the nineteenth of April and the seventeenth of June appeal to us more strongly, touch a deeper chord, than any others in our national history. Your presence to-day, on the anniversary of one of these dates, when we celebrate in fitting and impressive manner events which lend a special significance to the other, is proof of the deep interest which this occasion has excited; for we are celebrating not only the seventeenth of June, the anniversary of that glorious battle whose very name quickens the pulse of every American, but we are celebrating also the nineteenth of April, the anniversary of that engagement which cost the first blood shed in the Revolutionary struggle, the cry of which, from the field of Lexington, reached throughout the land, rousing to arms the militia and minute-men, and severing forever the bond between the colonies and the mother country.

Let us roll back the tide of one hundred and twenty-three years, and review, first, the historical setting and significance of the battle of Bunker Hill.

It is in the early summer of 1775. The principle of resistance to "taxation without representation" had already taken form in the burning of the Gaspé and in the celebration of the first Boston tea party. The English government has closed the port of Boston and placed a military governor over the people. Patrick Henry has uttered those memorable words: "There is no longer any room for hope. We must fight. I repeat it, sir, we must fight." The Massachusetts colony has set up a government independent of the military rule of Governor Gage, and raised a force of twelve thousand volunteers, one third of whom are minute-men.

Paul Revere has taken his famous midnight ride from Boston to Lexington, and the shot has been fired that reëchoed round the world.

Events have been crowding and drawing to a crisis in the excited region about Boston. Governor Gage has received a reinforcement from England under Generals Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne. He has now eight thousand men, and in order that the Americans may not get possession of Bunker Hill, and from that vantage ground fire into his camp, he has planned an expedition to seize this commanding position on the night of the eighteenth of June. What was his surprise, then, on the morning of the seventeenth, to find that the rebels had got the start of him, and had already seized and fortified the hill. The veil of night had shrouded all this work, and the British had no suspicion of what was going on. But *we* know what was going on in those hours of darkness; *we* know, for our fathers have told us. We have heard of that gallant and glorious hero who was given the charge of seizing and fortifying these heights. We have heard how he hurried from one part of the redoubt to another, exhorting and encouraging his men; how he went again and again to the water's edge to see if all were still on the other side in the British camp. Not only do *we*, the citizens of Hollis, share in a nation's tribute of praise, but we cherish, too, a degree of local pride; we feel that Col. William Prescott belongs in a certain sense to us, and that our ancestors helped him to win his laurels.

At dawn of day the Americans were espied at their work by the sailors on board the ships of war, and without waiting for orders, they opened fire upon the hill. The cannonading aroused the town of Boston. Not more astonished, perhaps, were the fallen angels to see the magnificent palace of the Pandemonium suddenly appear before their eyes, than was Governor Gage when he beheld on the opposite hill, a fortification full of men, which had sprung up in the course of the night.

He immediately called a council of war. After much discussion, the plan of landing in front of the works and pushing directly up the hill, on the ground that raw militia never could withstand the assault of veteran troops, was adopted. The sound of drum and trumpet, the clatter of hoofs, and the rattling of gun carriages, soon apprised the Americans on their rudely fortified height of an impending attack. Jaded by the night's labor and want of sleep, hungry and thirsty, they were ill fitted to withstand it. Some of the officers urged Colonel Prescott to send to Cambridge for fresh troops to relieve the weary men; but he, knowing well their spirit and temper, replied, "The men who have raised these works will best defend them." While Prescott was hurrying forward the work, General Putnam rode back and forth, straining every nerve to add to its means of defense. Disposing his troops to the best advantage, he coolly awaited the terrible onset which he knew was preparing for him.

The day was clear; not a cloud rested on the summer sky, and the heated earth seems to pant under the fierce rays of the noon-day sun. As he stood and gazed, with a stern yet anxious eye, a scene presented itself that might have moved the boldest heart. The British army had now crossed the channel, and stood in battle array on the shore. In the intervals of the roar of the artillery were heard the thrilling strains of martial music and the stirring blast of the bugle, while thousands of bayonets gleamed over the dark mass below. Nothing could exceed the grandeur and excitement of the scene at this moment. Strung over that hill, out of sight, lay fifteen hundred sons of liberty, awaiting the onset of the veteran thousands of England.

At length the British began to advance in two dense columns; when they were almost within the intrenchments, the signal to fire was given to our men. A sheet of flame replied, and the front rank of the foe went down as if suddenly engulfed in the earth. Those behind pressed steadily forward, but rank after rank fell amid their dying comrades, till at length the whole army, furious with rage and despair,

broke and fled for the shore. Then went up from that little redoubt a long and loud huzza, which was echoed the whole length of the lines. But the enemy rallied its columns, and again pressed gallantly forward, but only to be driven back a second time by the shower of steel.

The English commanders, not willing to acknowledge their defeat, now rallied for the third and last time their disordered troops, and marched up to the very intrenchments. Only one volley smote them now, for the Americans, alas! had fired their last cartridge, and, worse than all, were without bayonets. Clubbing their muskets, however, they still beat back the enemy, till the reluctant order to retreat was given. It was hard, indeed, that the ground, so nobly battled for, should be lost at last. But although the battle-field remained in the hands of the enemy, the victory was ours. The British loss in killed and wounded was over one thousand, including an unusually large number of officers, while the loss on the American side was less than half that number. Among the slain on our side was the distinguished patriot, General Warren, whose death was regarded as a public calamity. Upon the Americans this defeat, if defeat it could be called, had the effect of a triumph. It gave them confidence in themselves and consequence in the eyes of their enemies. They had proved to themselves and to others that they could measure arms with the disciplined soldiers of Europe and inflict the most harm in the encounter.

And, fellow citizens of Hollis, how many of us to-day, with feelings of just pride, may say, "My ancestor was at Bunker Hill; my ancestor fought and bled for sweet liberty on that consecrated height."

Last summer I visited for the first time Bunker Hill monument, and I can never forget the emotions which swayed my soul as I stood on the ground where the blood of our ancestors had reddened the greensward, and looked upon the monument which a grateful people had raised in memory of its fallen heroes. I had visited many a monument in the proud capitals of Europe; had walked in ancient Rome under the triumphal arches of the victorious emperors, Titus

and Constantine the Great; had admired in Paris the noble Arc de Triomphe of the great Napoleon; I had gazed with wonder upon the superb equestrian statue of Frederick the Great, in Germany's metropolis; and had beheld on the magnificent Trafalgar Square, in London, the graceful shaft which rears one hundred and forty-five feet in the air, the colossal statue of Nelson,—but none of these had stirred my soul to its very depths, as did that lonely granite column on Bunker Hill, lifting its magnificent proportions into the blue of heaven, as if it would write upon that bright expanse, in characters imperishable, the names of those heroes who had fought and bled upon the hallowed ground at its base.

But, my friends, the seventeenth of June, grand and glorious as it is, is not the date which comes nearest to our hearts on this occasion. The nineteenth of April is really and truly the day we celebrate. Let us then roll back the tide of time a little farther still. Let us recall the thrilling scenes which were enacted on that eventful day in 1775.

On the night of the eighteenth of April, Governor Gage had dispatched his secret expedition to destroy the military stores of the colonists at Concord. In accordance with their orders, they were to go by way of Lexington, and arrest Hancock and Adams, who were known to be stopping at the house of a friend. There were no telegraph wires, no long distance telephone lines in those days, but the news of this expedition spread like wildfire through the land, and mounted express brought the tidings to this good old town about noon of the nineteenth. Borrowing the refrain of Kipling's thrilling recessional, "Lest we forget, lest we forget," let us rehearse the oft told tradition of how the news was brought to Hollis. We have no Robert Browning to celebrate it in song; it is a plain, unvarnished tale, but it has brightened a page in history, and we do well to honor it to-day.

Deacon John Boynton, one of the Committee of Observation, living near the province line, came riding through the town at full speed, calling out to his townsmen, "the regulars are coming and killing our men." Stopping at the door of

Capt. Noah Worcester, another member of this committee, he found him with his face well lathered, in the act of shaving. On hearing the message, without stopping to finish his toilet, Captain Worcester hurried to his stable, mounted his horse, and assisted in spreading the alarm. By preconcerted arrangement, the firing of guns in different parts of the town also gave the signal for rallying, and in the afternoon of the same day, ninety-two minute-men were assembled on this Common, with musket and powder horn, ready to take up their line of march. Three of these minute-men were the Nevens brothers, whose history is dear and sacred to every native of Hollis, and whose memory we honor in the special commemorative exercises of this occasion.

A brief sketch of the early history of the family may not be uninteresting. In the spring of 1738, widow Margaret Nevens, with her three sons, William, Thomas, and David, removed from Newton, Mass., to West Dunstable, and settled in one of the Narragansett grants, which had been awarded to their ancestors in return for service rendered in the Narragansett war. This grant came within the boundaries of the township of old Monson, and the family settled at a place known as Monson Village. Here William Nevens, the oldest son, married in November, 1745, Miss Mary Hastings. In 1758 he removed to the east part of Hollis, to a place known as the Major James Wheeler farm. He was the father of six sons, five of whom served in the Revolutionary war. The youngest son, Phineas, was killed at the battle of Bunker Hill. The last member of the family, Gardner, a grandson of William Nevens, left Hollis before 1830 to reside in Bedford, N. H.

Resuming our narrative,—three of these brothers, early in the afternoon of the nineteenth of April, were at work with their crowbars, digging stones for a substantial wall, not far from their home. They had partially raised from its place a large, flat stone, partly embedded in the earth, when they saw a messenger spurring toward them at full speed. Putting a small boulder under the large stone to keep it in position,

they stopped their work and listened eagerly to the message of the horseman. Then, leaving the stone just as it was, they hastened to the house, and all three, with guns and equipments, hurried to this Common to join their company. Brave, noble men! How little did they dream then — and we say it not irreverently — that “the stone which the builders rejected, was to become the head of the corner,” that it was to be for us and for the generations to come, a precious stone, a jewel, in a setting of emerald!

Our grateful townsmen have wished to honor this stone by placing it on this historic spot; they have wished also to honor all those brave and noble men who, leaving the plow in the furrow and the hoe in the field, hastened to this Common to rally for freedom. They have therefore inscribed upon this tablet the names of the ninety-two men who, in order to “maintain their privileges and liberties, civil and sacred,” risked their lives and fortunes for the common good. Let us then with reverent hand lift the veil from this stone and from this tablet, and let this pious act be placed on record as a fitting tribute from the citizens of Hollis to the memory of its Revolutionary heroes. Let the spot where these stones rest, be a sacred spot; let us ever approach it with hushed voices and with uncovered heads; and as we read the words of the inscription and the names on the tablet, let our reverent and grateful thought so read between the lines, that every word and every name may become glorified to us—shrinéd, as it were, in a halo! And, recognizing the over-ruling hand of Providence, which guided our fathers through the perils of war, and enabled them to found a government established in righteousness, let these stones evermore impress a religious as well as a patriotic lesson, so that “when in time to come, your children shall ask their fathers, saying, what mean ye by these stones, that ye shall say to them, these stones are for a covenant and for a memorial, that all the people of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, and that they may fear the Lord their God forever!”

It is truly wonderful to note throughout our country the revival of interest in matters pertaining to the Revolutionary period. The influence of the societies of the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution is felt in every state of our union, and the work they have accomplished in preserving and perpetuating old landmarks and monuments, merits our lasting gratitude. It was especially interesting and pleasing to me, in a visit to my native town last summer, to see that old Hollis was not behind the times in this respect. All honor to the committee who have had in charge the improvement of the Common, and the marking of the graves of the Revolutionary soldiers! It is indeed fitting that our Common should be the object of your pride and of your especial care. What a history each blade of grass, could it speak, would give us of scenes enacted here in the years that are past! We have already spoken of the rallying of the nineteenth of April. In the following autumn, when the ranks of the army at Cambridge were thinned by the base desertion of the Connecticut regiments, another company of Hollis volunteers rallied here and marched to the seat of war, to supply the place of the mutineers. Again in 1776 we find Hollis soldiers with the army in Canada, at Ticonderoga, in the garrisons at Portsmouth, at White Plains, and in the bloody campaigns in New Jersey. The next year we find a company of Hollis soldiers under the gallant Stark, at the decisive battle of Bennington. In the summer of 1778, when Rhode Island was threatened with invasion, a company of forty-three mounted Hollis soldiers marched to aid in the defence. In 1780, when West Point was endangered by the base treason of Arnold, our ancestors responded readily to the call for volunteers; and so we might go on to speak of the Hollis continental quota in the New Hampshire regiments, in the battles of Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, Germantown, Stillwater, Saratoga, and in the final battles and surrender at Yorktown.

In our own day, too, this Common has seen our fathers, brothers, and sons, rallying in defence of the union, and

going forth, some of them to offer up noble lives on the altar of their country.

From the beginning to the end of the Revolutionary conflict, the "Hampshire boys" were noted for their fidelity to duty, their good conduct and intrepidity, so that their gallant commanders could at all times say with the Trojan Hector,

"Where heroes war, the foremost place we claim,
The first in danger and the first in fame."

And these are our ancestors, fellow citizens! Well may we be proud of them, well may we honor their memory. Let me quote from Henry G. Little, the clever author of "Hollis Seventy Years Ago": "I have known much of life in many towns in different states, and I can say, upon the whole, that in none have I found more morality, good order, and genuine Christian uprightness, than were to be found in the Hollis of seventy years ago." And again: "What do you raise in this barren country?" exclaimed a visitor, who had noted the rugged land, the thin and stony soil. "We raise men," was the prompt reply. During the first hundred years of its existence, it is said that no other town of its size could boast of so many college graduates. In all the professions, educated Hollis men were to be found, filling high positions with honor. During that first hundred years, forty of them entered the sacred calling of the ministry.

Let me quote, too, from the historical address delivered at Plymouth by the Rev. Henry A. Hazen in 1865: "It was good blood, too, that Hollis had to give, and did give, to the new settlement. The high character which she has always maintained, and the large number of useful and eminent men whom she furnished to the world, indicate the quality of the original stock from which so many of the Plymouth settlers came, and of which, we may add, they did not prove themselves unworthy. They developed enterprise, sagacity, character, which we who come after them may well honor while we commemorate."

But while ascribing merited honor to our Revolutionary heroes, we must not forget that we had a Revolutionary

heroine, whose brave exploit won for her a place in history. Why should we not revive the tale? "After the departure of Colonel Prescott's regiment of minute-men, Mrs. David Wright, of Pepperell, and Mrs. Job Shattuck, of Groton, and the neighboring women, collected at what is now Jewett's bridge over the Nashua river, clothed in their absent husbands' apparel and armed with muskets, pitchforks, and such other weapons as they could find. Having elected Mrs. Wright their commander, they resolutely determined that no foe to freedom, foreign or domestic, should pass that bridge. Soon a man appeared on horseback, supposed to be treasonably engaged in carrying intelligence to the enemy. By order of Mrs. Wright, in her assumed character of sergeant of the bridge guard, this man was seized, searched, and detained as a prisoner. Dispatches were found in his boots, which were sent to the Committee of Safety, and the tory himself was given over to the custody of the Committee of Observation, of Groton. The maiden name of Mrs. Wright was Prudence Cummings. She was born in Hollis, and one of her brothers was in the company of Captain Dow at Bunker Hill and afterwards a soldier in the Continental army.

While no other Hollis woman, probably, took so active a part in the stirring scenes of the times, we must not forget the less ostentatious services of the mothers, wives, and sisters of the Revolutionary soldiers, who, throughout the whole struggle, were busily engaged in providing supplies and comforts for their absent loved ones. And, let us add, the Hollis women have always nobly contributed their part, both in times of war and peace, towards maintaining the high standard of active usefulness and strict morality which has ever marked the history of the town. Were it not for stirring tender, sacred memories, we might speak at length of the earnest, faithful services of our saintly mothers, whose mantles, we trust, have fallen upon not unworthy shoulders.

As our town boasts of no great natural advantages whereby it is possible to acquire great wealth, the highest ambition of Hollis families, from the beginning, has been to secure for their children the best of moral and educational advantages,

and this could be gratified only by close economy and stern self-denial. If the sons and daughters of Hollis who have gone forth into the world, have filled high and responsible positions, if they have become centres of influence and powers for good, let them be assured that they cannot feel too grateful for their early home training, for the pure and healthful moral atmosphere of the town in which their characters were formed, and for the examples of noble, Christian manhood and womanhood, which their fathers and mothers furnished them.

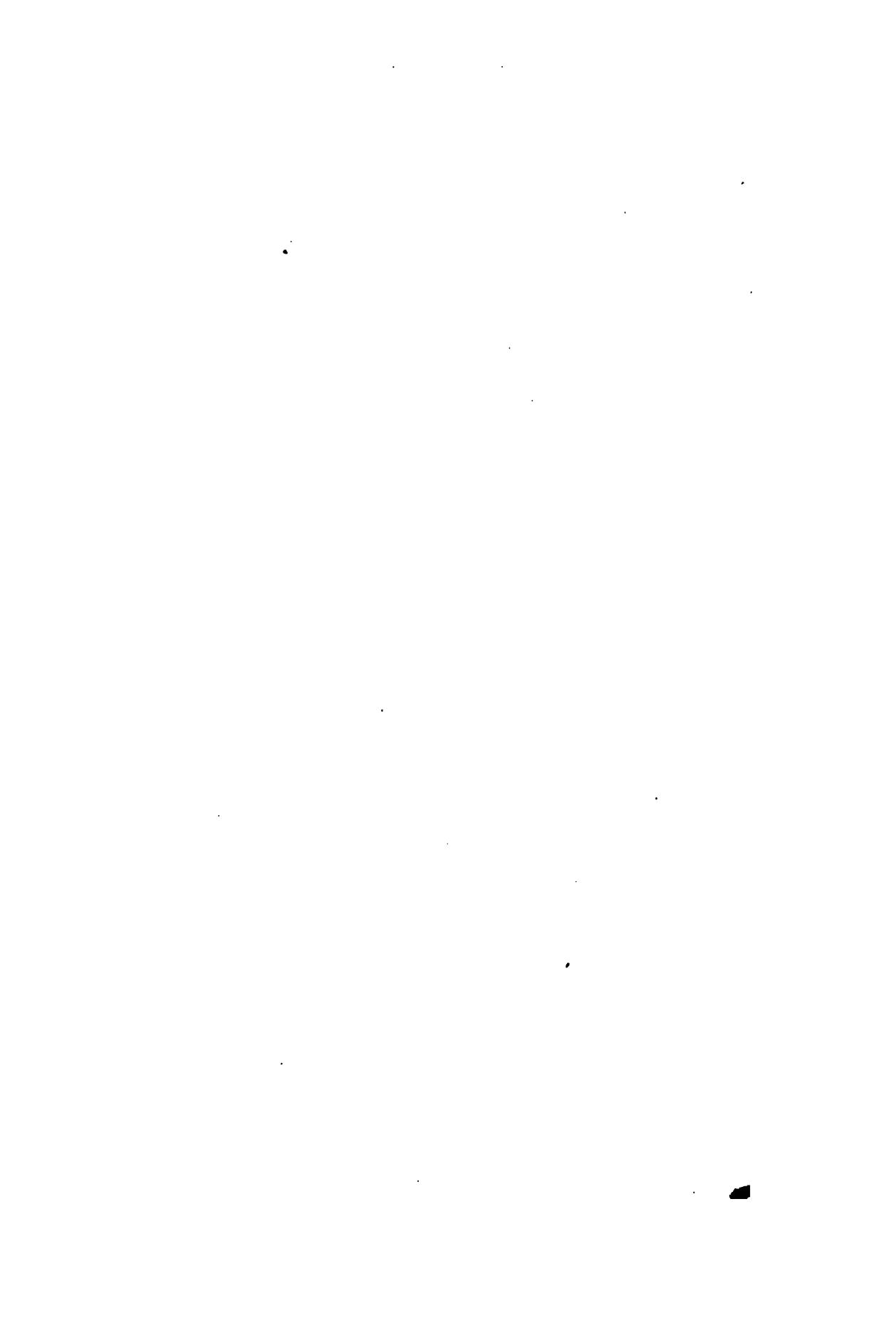
As we advance in life, we come to value these things more highly. We love to come back to our old homes; to clasp hands with the friends of former days; to talk over the good old times; to sit under the old trees; to wander through the old lanes and along the meadow streams. No apples and pears ever taste so good as the Hollis apples and pears; no one makes so good pumpkin pies and plum puddings as our mothers used to make; no friendships are like those which were formed in our school days; and so, as we go out into the wide world, we do not forget our early home. The ties that bind us to it are never severed — they last forever.

In dedicating these stones to-day, we are discharging a duty to a past generation. Let us not forget, however, that we have a duty to the present. Let us not forget that we are leaving upon the characters of the young, imprints more lasting than the names upon this tablet. The rain pelting, the angry wind, and the flight of seasons will in time obliterate this inscription and efface these names; but the lessons, the impressions made upon character, survive the wreck of time, and are translated in eternity. Let us be faithful to this trust; then may we say with an ancient classic poet, "I have erected a monument more lasting than brass, and more sublime than the regal elevation of pyramids, which neither the wasting shower, the unavailing north wind, nor the innumerable succession of years, shall be able to demolish."













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